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Continuity, change, and crisis: mapping South Africa's political terrain

Beresford, A. (2015). *South Africa's Political Crisis: Unfinished liberation and fractured class struggles*. Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire. ISBN: 978-1-137-43659-7. Pp.1-179.

Cornell, D. (2014). *Law and revolution in South Africa: uBuntu, dignity, and the struggle for constitutional transformation*. Fordham University Press. ISBN: 978-0-8232-5758-4 pp.1-208.

Hamilton, L. (2014). *Are South Africans Free?* Bloomsbury Press: London. ISBN: 978-1-4725-3461-3. Pp.1-155.

Hart, G. (2014). *Rethinking the South African crisis: nationalism, populism, hegemony* (Vol. 20). UKZN Press: Scottsville. ISBN: 978-1-86914-251-3. Pp.1-268.

Picard, L. and Mogale, T. (2015). *The limits of democratic governance in South Africa*. Lynne Rienner Publishers: London. ISBN: 978-1-62637-087-6. Pp.1-275.

Super, G. (2013). *Governing through Crime in South Africa: The politics of race and class in neoliberalizing regimes*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd: Farnham, Surrey. ISBN: 978-1-4094-4474-9. Pp.1-182.

Significantly, two of the books under review make reference in their title to a 'crisis'. This reflects a change in the tenor of academic and popular discussions of South Africa in recent years, nurtured by the sense that we are seeing new contours on the country's political landscape. Are we in a moment of rupture? Or are we seeing more clearly the sedimentary layers that have been slowly accumulating, changing the parameters of the polity? Do these new contours make us question the old markers we used to mark political time and space in South Africa? Can we map these emergent contours in ways that allow us to predict the course of change in the future? These are the questions at the heart of the six books in this review essay.

Gillian Hart's text begins with the Marikana Massacre of 16th August 2012, when 34 striking miners were killed, and scores more injured. For Hart, this was 'the most momentous [moment] of the post-apartheid era, made all the more so by its passage into popular culture', which 'laid bare the contours of the South African crisis' (84). Her text primarily explores from the terrain from this massacre back to the Bredell land occupation in July 2001, when the government harshly evicted thousands who were sold plots by those putatively from the PAC. Hart uses this analysis to reconsider our understanding of the transition from apartheid, and to offer a corrective to our understanding of Gramsci's sense of the 'passive revolution'.

Hart's analytical reframing of the transition tackles one of the key frustrations in work on South Africa in the last twenty years: the glib use of 'neoliberalism' as the pejorative catchall to describe both cause and consequence of the nation's woes, and an analytical fixation on the Growth Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) programme in 1996. Analytically, the reduction of South Africa's complex political economy to this homogenous terminology and timeline serves nobody:

it neither helps us to understand nor to tackle the cacophony of actors, ideologies and practices that we see before us.

Encouragingly, Hart (like others in this review) argues that neo-liberalism is not analytically fit for purpose. In its place, she focuses on processes of 'denationalisation' and 'renationalisation'. The former refers to the varied changes emerging out of South Africa's integration in the global economy and the latter refers to attempts to (re)mobilise and (re)model the nation. For Hart, these are analytical not normative categories. As she argues more fully in chapter four, renationalisation includes calls for a rainbow nation, moves to build Fortress South Africa and pushes for a National Democratic Revolution. These competing nationalisms are crucial to our understanding South Africa today. Yet, Hart argues, nationalism has often been neglected by left-wing scholars keen to dismiss it as evidence of false consciousness rather than – as Fanon recognised – both politically essential and dangerous in equal measure. Grasping their analytical utility leads us to see GEAR less as a simple roll back of the state, and more as a 'redefinition of the National Democratic Rule in terms of a re-articulation of race, class, and nationalism, along with the assertion of new technologies of rule' (184). To understand how the interplay of multiple forms of denationalisation and renationalisation shape statehood, parties, and popular politics Hart focuses our gaze locally, where multi-scalar processes condense to be contested.

Hart's second chapter curates a political scrapbook of developments between 2001 and 2012, which leans heavily on extended extracts from newspaper articles and her own fieldwork notes, alongside political cartoons. Those new to South Africa will find this an engaging introduction. However, those already familiar with developments will crave more of Hart's own analysis. Where this comes to the fore, her perspectives are largely very insightful. For example, she stresses the heterogeneity *within* the social movements that emerged in the early 2000s, taking an angle that is both analytical and empathetic, and highlighting the need for more research exploring members' diverse philosophies, voices, practices, achievements and challenges. Hart approvingly cites a grassroots activist who argues, 'the anger of the poor can go in many directions' (207). Such analysis can help us understand where and why.

Hart's broader point here, though, is that many of these social movements were short-lived. In their place emerged more ephemeral and less structured constellations of actors termed 'movements beyond movements', which had an 'irreducibly local dimension' (87). On this point, I remain less convinced: the continued importance of organised labour; the persistence of social movements like Abahlali baseMjondolo, Equal Education or Khulumani Support Group; and the national shutdown sparked by Fees Must Fall university protests all seem to question this conclusion. The very fact that UCT felt the need to interdict twitter hashtags like #feesmustfall and #rhodesmustfall in order to stop protests on their campus was testament to the international co-ordination, organisation, debate and solidarity that occurred on social media during this campaign.

Chapter three effectively underscores the paucity of phrases like 'service delivery protests' or 'bottom-up resistance to top-down neo-liberalism' when they are used to capture the political processes at play in South Africa. Focusing on water provision in Ladysmith and Newcastle, Hart usefully teases apart the tangled local politics that both shape distinctive policy approaches in both areas and make full policy implementation impossible. Particularly welcome here is Hart's convincing argument that whilst councillors remain the political focus of communities fighting for recognition and resources, this political visibility is at odds with their decreasing leverage within local government (133). Clearly, these figures remain politically formidable in other ways, but Hart provides an important correction to authors, like Hamilton, who see councillors as institutionally powerful characters who 'make the decisions behind closed doors' (80). This chapter also adds empirical weight to Hart's argument that, since 2003, the government has adopted purportedly pro-poor, developmental policies (103). These paternalistic, poorly implemented reforms have only exacerbated local anger but such shifts remain important nonetheless and compound the shortcomings of simplistic 'neoliberal' labels.

Hart proceeds to probe the strength of ANC hegemony, and explores the multiple waves of popular politics that South Africa has encountered. She argues that 'official articulations of the 'nation' and 'liberation' are not just cynical manipulations from above, or manifestations of 'exhausted nationalism' (23). They convey great normative power, to which those who were oppressed by and opposed to apartheid connect. That said, whilst references to the liberation struggle and National Democratic Revolution can bolster ANC power, they also make the organisation vulnerable to 'counter claims of betrayal' (189). Thus, ANC hegemony, for Hart, is not just an matter of manipulation or consent but instead 'an on-going process of struggle' (180). Contestation is constant, although protestors find themselves, Gramsci's words, adopting the 'forms and languages of domination in order to be heard' (193). Such conclusions leads Hart to question the utility of distinguishing theoretically between 'socialist populism from below' and 'bourgeois populism from above' (197). Preferring instead to explore the fractious interplay of contestation between multiple arenas she marks out a shift from attempts to 'neutralise popular antagonisms' (197) in the first half of the 2000s to attempts 'develop but contain' (201) them in the second half of that decade.

Drawing the book to a close, Gramsci's concept of the passive revolution, which she understands as a process in which new social forms displace old ones, whilst there is a simultaneous 'deliberate and structural pacification of subaltern classes'. Deploying this concept in South Africa, she argues, allows us to conduct a spatio-historical analysis that takes seriously local meanings, realities, critiques and mobilisations, as well as exploring their broader inter-linkages. This approach, she argues, combined with insights from feminist scholars and Fanon, allow us to 'confront the brutalities of the present and construct a different future' (230).

This question of what South Africa's future might and should hold are ultimately left open in Hart's text. This stands in stark contrast to Hamilton's text, which is

strongly driven from the beginning by a call for institutional reform that – he believes – will secure the freedom of South African citizens.

For Hamilton, freedom is the power, through representation, to act and be as you desire; to decide on a government as part of a political community; to be able to act ‘self-reflectively’ choose whether to adhere to given ‘norms, expectations and power relations’, and to determine your social and political surroundings through ‘meaningful control over ones economic and political representatives’ (26). Where freedom as power is lacking, he argues, people’s ability to identify, express, evaluate or meet their own needs is jeopardised (131).

Hamilton argues that all of the capabilities above must be fulfilled for people to be considered free. On that basis, he concludes, South Africans are not free. His reasoning is worth quoting in full:

‘The effects of poverty and inequality on the poor are stark and obvious in that they impose a series of material and psychological obstacles to their freedom of power, the effects of high levels of poverty and inequality are similarly, if not equally, disempowering for wealthy South Africans: the levels of crime, jealousy, and fear that high levels of inequality and poverty generate in any society, but particularly in South Africa, lead the wealthy either to disempower themselves by shutting themselves off from the wider community behind barbed wire and high walls or become disempowered by the anxieties, phobias and illnesses these conditions generate’ (9-10).

Here, Hamilton consciously makes the fates of both rich and poor comparable, even if not entirely commensurate. His inspiration is Mandela’s dictum that ‘freedom is indivisible’ and the humanity of both the oppressor and the oppressed are undermined when one dominates the other. Even after apartheid, Mandela stated, South Africans needed strive for more than the ‘right not to be oppressed’; they needed to live ‘in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others’ (8).

Mandela’s point was primarily moral but Hamilton argues that we need to empty the statement of its normative implications (10). What Mandela’s statement offers, for Hamilton, is simply an encouragement to introduce institutions that will engineer (coercively if necessary) a better South Africa for all.

This movement from normative to institutional; sacrificial to coercive is driven by Hamilton’s belief that humans are fundamentally self-interested. Expecting people to acknowledge their privilege and forge an alternative political community based on social solidarity, civic duty and sacrifice is, for him, ‘wishful thinking’ (89). Only well-functioning, accountable, representative institutions will bring about reform, and these reforms will be ushered in when elites feel they face a credible threat of revolution (128).

The difficulty is that this formulation absolves privileged South Africans of the responsibility that they have – in whole or part – for the poverty of their fellow

citizens and their own supposed lack of freedom. This moral absconcion is exacerbated by Hamilton's proposition that in 'modern' life (temporally undefined) issues are so complex and multi-scalar that individual actions can no longer secure direct outcomes with regards to freedom (29). Therefore, only power through representatives is deemed effective. As we will see below, this places him in direct contention with Cornell's vision for a future South Africa. For Cornell, political visions are grounded in the recognition and expansion of our shared humanity. This, in turn, gives institutions their form and function. Hamilton essentially argues that we can reconcile ourselves to a world in which the inhumanity of self-interested actors can simply be contained by institutional reform.

Let us turn to the institutional reforms that Hamilton suggests, before considering the viability and desirability of this broader position. First, Hamilton argues that political representation and accountability are minimal, at best. At the root of this issue, for Hamilton, is the gap that exists for representation. Political representation, he argues, depends on a gap between rulers and the ruled. Into this gap would-be representatives provide people with multiple images of themselves upon which to reflect. In this process of reflecting on various group images with which they can identify (albeit always incompletely) people can form and articulate their interests. The difficulty, Hamilton argues, is that the representational gap in South Africa is both too broad and too slim.

Its breadth stems from an electoral system that strengthens the leverage of political parties and weakens that of constituents. In its place, Hamilton seeks mixed system of Proportional Representation and First Past The Post, as in Ireland or Germany. Meanwhile, the ANC attempts to 'close the gap' by claiming that only they can represent 'the people'. This, for Hamilton, is dangerous and tyrannous, as there is no space for citizens to reflect on alternative images of themselves. Critiques of South Africa's electoral system and the ANC's tendency to denounce all opposition as treachery are well established. What Hamilton misses here, is what Hart emphasises: The ANC's attempt to monopolise people's 'image' of themselves and their political community has always been – and is increasingly – contested. Hamilton's argument would have benefited from more attention to the reception rather than the projection of 'images'. His suggestion that loyalty to the ANC is garnered through a socialisation into powerlessness and 'placation' through social grants, for example, falls short of appreciating the complex reasons why people continue to support the party (89).

Secondly, Hamilton claims that the constitutional court, rather than the parliament, is sovereign in post-apartheid South Africa. Rights, he argues, are one of the 'main reasons for the lack of freedom of power' in South Africa today (19). Serving as 'trumps' not 'processes' (37). They fail to empower and engage people, he argues. They also fail to ensure that the broader politico-economic environment in which they operate will be progressive (19). In sum, they are 'the modern opiate for politically neutered populations' (Geuss and Hamilton, 89). With the exception of the work of the Treatment Action Campaign and its battle for ARVs, Hamilton dismisses rights-based action through the courts as 'hyper-legal' and 'atomistic' (84), claiming that it fails to substantively expand freedom

as power. Whilst the 'judicialisation of politics' (Comaroff and Comaroff 2006) has long been an issue in South Africa, to suggest that demobilisation is necessarily an outcome of a strong constitutional court enforcing comprehensive rights ignores the degree to which rights are adopted, adapted and utilised by grassroots movements and 'movements beyond movements' (to use Hart's term) on a daily basis (see Robbins 2008). His solution is decennial plebiscite that gives people the power and capacity to revise the constitution after a month-long citizenship festival. He also proposes the ongoing right of any citizen to propose a constitutional revision and procedural safeguards that prioritise the satisfaction of vital needs and safeguard the process from capture or corruption (136).

Hamilton's faith in this 'citizenship festival' stands in contrast to his dismissal of protests as violent reflections of 'extreme discontent' (83) mobilised by activists and civil society leaders acting out of naivety or purveying 'false hope' (124). Such protests, he claims, simply stir up an 'otherwise depoliticized and powerless citizenry' (83) to 'yell... against the wind' about single issues (124). It also stands in contrast to his dismissal of increased participation in local government issues, discussed below. The only use of protests, suggests Hamilton, is to convince the elite that a revolution is nigh, pushing them to initiative institutional reforms.

This rendering of social protest as the (often violent) instantiation of agent provocateurs is a disappointing dismissal of the agency, philosophy, vision, and activism of South Africans, and seems to stand in contrast to call in Hart's work to understand the voice and reason of individuals within each political mobilisation.

Thirdly, Hamilton argues that South Africa's macro-economic policy fails to tackle its poverty and inequality. The problem, he argues, is that economically powerful actors can compromise economic reform but possess no legal veto power. Consequently, the creditor class continues to distrust the future of the economy. Hamilton seeks to fix this by increasing the representation of the poor, with a particular focus on the unemployed, proposing a 'tribune of the plebs' with the power to impeach and propose legislation. He seeks to 'safeguard' Plebs from the logic of political parties but also institutionally provides for the election of at least one quarter of their number into the national assembly in order to ensure that they are not marginalised.

Finally, Hamilton questions the utility of efforts to date to increase the democracy of local government. These reforms, he argues, have often strengthened 'often deeply regressive' traditional leadership and focused on better *participation*, rather than improved *representation*. He concludes that there should instead be District Assemblies to strengthen local representation and a revitalised consiliar system to provide district representation. He proposes using a lottery-based selection system if necessary to short-cut political party loyalties and other elite, vested interests.

In all, Hamilton places his hope on institutional design and reform, and his work is useful for helping us to rethink how the rules of the game might be adapted to better serve those who are currently marginalised. I would argue, however, that institutions will only ever be part of the solution to securing a truly free South Africa. Without the concomitant reorientation of the privileged towards a more inter-connected, morally responsible mode of governance, formal institutional provisions will fall prey to non-institutionalised forms of power. As Hart reminds us, the Marikana massacre revealed the contours of the crisis in South Africa. An integral part of that crisis was the fact that then-businessman, Cyril Ramaphosa, could boast of his influence in government, urging ministers to take strong action against striking miners who he branded as criminals. As Beresford argues in his book, these informal networks play a crucial role in determining how formal institutions function in South Africa, and beyond.

Whereas Hamilton eschews the role of morals and the constitutional norms in envisaging and pursuing political progress, Cornell 'recouples' law and revolution, seeing them as central and indivisible from the post-apartheid project. She strongly critiques the idea that the constitution should be representative of what voters think on a particular issue rather than the principles that they wish a new nation to embody: her vision is one of transformative constitutionalism.

Cornell starts from the perspective that South Africans need to eschew the idea embodied in transitional justice – that the revolution is behind us – and pay heed to Hans Kelsen's notion of a 'substantive revolution'. She explains the latter as a process that 'turns the world upside down by creating a new objective, normative legal order that is based on an ethical principle that negates the ethical acceptability of the old order' (154). These ethical principles – or *Grundnorms* – in South Africa, she argues, are dignity and uBuntu (49). From this starting point, the key questions that remain for Cornell are: What does it mean to remain revolutionary? How do we define and engage with uBuntu? And how should we proceed with this legal project in the midst of a 'poli-cultural' country (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003)? That is, a country where people's religious or ethnic identities cannot be cast off or subsumed beneath their identity as citizen.

Cornell pursues these questions in a collection of essays. Her opening essays explore the role of theory and substantive revolution. Heidegger's concept of *Gestell* is explored in the first as Cornell asks whether indigenous thought and practices have 'survived the horror of colonialism, apartheid, and more generally, the aftermath of international development' (32). This question is left open, and picked up more broadly throughout the book. Next, Laclau and Mouffe's concept of 'radical democracy' is critiqued. In their recent writing, Cornell argues, there is no space for insisting that capitalism must be overthrown in order for revolutionary progress to occur. The democratic control of economic resources, however, has been at the centre of recent mobilisations such as that of 'uBuntu electricians' who have re-connected houses whose arrears triggered state disconnection from the grid, or struggles over housing and dignity driven by Abahlali baseMjondolo (39-41).

Her remaining essays explore the conceptualisation and application of uBuntu more directly. She conceives of uBuntu as an African 'philosophical ethic' that has universal application. The norm assumes that we are born into ethical and social bonds but that these obligations do not come at the cost of individual freedom. Rather, we forge our personhood and freedom *through* our engagement with, commitment to, and support from others. This process of engagement is key, for Cornell: uBuntu is not a 'contractual ethic in which self-interested individuals arrive at an agreement that is to their mutual advantage' but an 'activist virtue' (88). Abiding by this principle demands that we actively forge both the shared world on which it depends and our individual presence within it. In this process, we are called to move transcendently backwards to ancestor engagement, forwards to community, and beyond to 'mutual support' that facilitates us in developing our own personhood (161).

UBuntu, Cornell argues, has the capacity to fundamentally change how we view and navigate complex social, political and economic challenges. Certainly, it has changed her thinking on key issues. One essay shared in the collection reviews the AZAPO case, which brought into question the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's capacity to provide conditional amnesty, superseding the rights of citizens to pursue justice through civil and criminal courts for these acts. Cornell had previously argued that this case overlooked developments in international law, as well as the importance of 'restitutional equality' and comprehensive reparation (47). She now argues, however, that our verdict on the case should be made through the lenses of dignity and uBuntu. Cornell concludes that, on this criteria, the judgement succeeds: the TRC did not sacrifice individual rights for social goods (73). Rather, it pushed for social repair and the (re)creation of each individual's ethical humanity through acts public condolence and mourning that – if taken seriously – would have led people to 'institutionalize a society that aspires to justice' (58).

Engaging with uBuntu, Cornell argues, can also help us provide important philosophical correctives to key thinkers like Rawls and Kant. For example, she highlights the shortcomings of Rawls' call for 'conjectural reasoning'. Rawls calls us to respect others as equal and acknowledge their ability to be reasonable and rational. As Cornell stresses, however, we cannot give primacy to any 'particular ontology, liberal or otherwise' in this process (81). Ultimately, to fully respect this notion, she centres on Tzvetan Todorov's notion of 'transcultural learning', which demands that we engage in mutual learning and engagement with one another. Only then, Cornell argues, can we see how other ontologies and worldviews may be equally suitable foundation for the acknowledging and protecting the dignity of others. This is an idea that she pursues further in her later chapter on ethical feminism, in which she considers how uBuntu's conceptualisation of freedom and obligation as intimately bound, co-facilitated principles can further feminist debates.

Many of her later essays operate in dialogue with one or two key court cases. For example, she uses the *Shilubana* case in which it was debated whether a woman could become a *hosi* in Valoyi law as well as the narrative of a lesbian sangoma to argue that customary law is a living vernacular law that is fundamentally flexible.

In this context - where there is no clear difference between interpreting and making the law - we are left with principles that are fully compatible with an evolving society. In this sense, vernacular law is not regressive nor inherently patriarchal or premodern. Court judgements often under-estimate this flexibility, Cornell argues, because they lack a grounded knowledge of vernacular law and ethics like uBuntu. With more detailed ethnographic studies from below, the full potential of 'inter-legality' grounded in notions of uBuntu and dignity would be realised.

Cornell's work is to be praised for pushing legal academics and practitioners to resist any westernised or modernised dismissal of African philosophy, morality and legality. Her call for 'transcultural' learning is particularly salient in the light of recent calls to decolonise the academy. However, the essay by Yvonne Mokgoro and Stu Woolman placed before her conclusion highlights the concerns I have with this text: Cornell's reliance on single case studies has highlighted the progressive potential of uBuntu but has not provided us with a fuller account of how it is currently understood and mobilised throughout broader societies and communities. In the evidence she does provide to support uBuntu we find a mix of thoughts, words, and deeds that consciously refer to the principle and those she sees as being 'infused with uBuntu thinking' (163). By amassing evidence in this way, she leaves herself open to the charge that she has claimed all progressive acts in the name of uBuntu, rather than wrestling with the full range of actual incidents in which it has been cited. A small but important note of clarification on this point: 'uBuntu electricians' seems to be an etic rather than an emic term. Certainly, in the work I have done on informal electricity connections in Durban, this was not a term that was used. Indeed, whilst activists often referred to these service providers as 'struggle electricians' they were simply called 'electricians' by many residents; one of many service providers whose services were criminalised by the state in these marginalised areas. Ultimately, then, Cornell demonstrates the potential progressive power of uBuntu as a notion, but fails to disprove the critiques she identifies: that uBuntu is conservative, communal at the expense of the individual, and a fading notion in the modern world.

Whilst Cornell's text focuses on the progressive potential of the law in South Africa, Super's book analyses governance through crime over the last thirty years; a process that has been fundamentally complex and rarely singularly progressive.

Super's analysis focuses on the cultural and political significance of crime in South Africa, probing the links between official criminology and society in their historical context. Her starting point is 1976, a crisis point in apartheid after which there was a perceptible shift from racial Fordism towards privatisation. She also makes two other distinctions: the period from 1989 to 1994, marking the emergence of the post-apartheid era; and that between 1994 and 2004, signifying the end of Mbeki's first term and the consolidation of the transition. This framing allows Super to delve into the overlaps in discourse and practice between different actors and eras.

Rather than rejecting the term neoliberalism, as Hart does, Super engages with it in a thoughtful and interrogative fashion. For Super, the commodification of social life and the expansion of the market as regulator rest at the heart of neoliberalism, but by its nature and in its application neoliberalism is a fundamentally uneven process, which can affect the criminal justice system in diverse ways. As Herbert and Brown (2006) and Wacquant (2010) have argued, neoliberalism may have an elective affinity with punitive penal policies. However, Super argues that it may also has a ‘ “benign” softer side’ (18) encouraging the responsibilised subject to partake in diversion programmes, social crime prevention, restorative justice initiatives, and so forth. Therefore, to identify the importance of neoliberal processes is always the start, not the end, of our analysis.

Super’s second chapter charts the rise of governing through crime and the growing role of the victim, who has come to occupy centre stage in recent years. Usefully, she also explores how the ANC’s determination to monopolise political and symbolic capital has driven them to criminalise political resistance and de-politicise crime; a tendency they had fought so hard against during apartheid. The result has been the emergence of a moral degenerate – the ‘unadulterated criminal other’ - who is blamed for thwarting the promise of post-apartheid South Africa.

This argument informs Super’s critique of the National Crime Prevention Strategy, which appears later in the text. The NCPS has been praised by many commentators for its focus on the community, its emphasis on the need for broad-based development, and it calls for co-produced security in which people police themselves. Super criticises this document, however, for being ‘markedly apolitical’ (86) and managerial, calling forth whole range of strategies from social crime prevention to situational crime prevention. Whilst it mentions some historical causes of crime, Super argues that the NCPS fails to fully politicise the roots of crime in South Africa. Although the appearance of the responsibilized citizen in this policy document was relatively novel, she concludes that many of the other spectres and strategies in NCPS had their roots in apartheid thinking.

Super’s acknowledgement of the criminalisation of political resistance and its impact on policing also informs her important comment that popular protests have criminalised the poor through the ‘hard hitting and repressive techniques’ used to subdue them (82). This stands in welcome contrast to other texts in this review, which depict protestors as violent and elide any violence on side of the state.

Chapters three, four, and five explore the socio-political construction of criminality, criminal archetypes, and community-based solutions to crime. There is no simple narrative of continuity or change in these chapters: whilst much has changed, paradigms and policies (ironically) re-emerge and the new archetypes of the sophisticated organised criminal or the illegal migrant build on the ‘edifice’ of stereotypes from former regimes. In fact, Super’s most valuable contribution is her exploration of the ways in which particular foci in crime and punishment are

flexible enough to remerge in highly diverse socio-political contexts to serve multiple different ends, sometimes simultaneously.

She argues, for example, that a move towards community policing is a politically 'flexible' act. Whilst such a move could empower citizens it could also be used to suggest that crime was the product of a degenerate few, providing a useful fig-leaf to cover the structural perversities of apartheid and their criminological consequences. Similarly, emphasising the socio-economic roots of crime is not necessarily a politically progressive act. Socio-economic theories of crime emerged as Afrikaner Nationalist Criminology (with its explicit link between race and crime) lost ground in the 1970s. They remain one of many criminological ideas in play. Their appearance, however, served diverse ends: whilst they highlighted the need for development, they also released the police from a responsibility for the crime rate; an opportunity that was gratefully seized in the midst of emergency rule.

Throughout these chapters, Super provides engaging insights into the curation of statistics, powerfully demonstrating how they reveal the priorities and perspectives of the government. In an era when the white minority government was using the criminal justice system to tighten its hold on power, for example, statistics recorded any violations of the immorality act during apartheid, but not assaults by farmers of farm workers. More recently, the emergence of 'fortress South Africa' is reflected in the division between citizens and non-citizens in statistical reportage.

Super's sixth chapter focuses on punishment, charting the shift from 'physically violating an offender's body' to 'deprivation of liberty' (108). In the latter years of apartheid, the use of corporal punishment was restricted, focused increasingly on young, black men. Talk of carceral rehabilitation was on the rise, although what this meant in practice was heavily racialised. Those who witnessed the abolition of the death penalty in 1990 and heard the ANC's opposition to 'large-scale imprisonment' might have expected their ascent into government to be marked by progressive penal reform. Instead, prison sentences proliferated in number and length. Interpreting these penal shifts, Super emphasises both the pressure that the ANC found itself under but also its own punitive history in Quatro. Observing the flexibility of uBuntu that Cornell failed to fully tackle, Super highlights how the principle has been used to justify both the elimination of the death sentence and the institution of longer prison sentences. Currently, South African prisons are 136% of capacity (135).

Super's book is a valuable insight into the diverse techniques of governance that co-exist in post-apartheid South Africa, supporting diverse and incongruous objectives (141). It also succeeds in a difficult goal: to provide a nuanced and rigorous account of a complex issue over a substantial time frame.

This is a goal also attempted by Picard and Mogale. Their timeframe is even more ambitious: from the entrance of colonial settlers until the present day. The authors state that their aim is to explore 'the people who make up government, the people who are affected by the government, and the social fabric that ideally

binds societies together' (3), using these to explore policy failure and political reality at a local level. In particular, their focus is on the governance of black South Africans and its consequences for South Africa as a whole today (2). They operate on the belief that 'local-level self-governance is key to the establishment of a developmental state' (5). Here, they make a distinction between political decentralisation and administrative decentralisation - the 'deconcentration of power' - where those who lead local administration are given power of discretion but remain under the control of central authority, or representatives of it (prefects) (14).

The authors begin with the colonial origins of local control, noting two major changes: the imposition of top-down prefectoral rule, which overlaid traditional authority and the distortion of traditional authority by colonial powers. In this and subsequent chapters, Picard and Mogale give particular attention to the roles of chiefs and headmen, their contradictions, and the tense relationship of these officials with the white minority government. Throughout their opening analysis, the authors emphasise the importance of the magisterial district, and the figure of the magistrate in shaping people's everyday encounters with colonialism. This prefectoral role that the magistrate played, they claim, has been remarkably persistent over time. Thus, they argue that the origins of apartheid governance mechanisms are found in the British Empire. Their focus during the apartheid state is on the rise of the Department of Native Administration from 'backwater' institution to the lynchpin of apartheid governance. The authors follow the departmental reforms during which the institution is renamed and restructured, to reflect the shifting realities of and justifications for apartheid.

Throughout this analysis, the authors provide useful detail on the regional differences that existed across the country, as well as broader differences between urban and rural South Africa. However, aside from a brief reference to role theory (89), which is not fully developed, the chapters remain largely descriptive. This is something of a missed opportunity: Their material could have been brought into dialogue with Mamdani's (1996) seminal text and the studies that it has spawned over the past twenty years, or they could have engaged in the political geographic analyses, like that of Anthony Lemon's (1991) in urban areas. These authors and debates, however, do not receive mention. Moreover, whilst their aim is to explore state actors, subjects and citizens few if any of these voices are captured directly in their text: something that stands in stark contrast to the rise of rich anthropological studies of local governance in recent years (see, for example, Bierschenk et al 2014).

The latter half of the book covers the prolonged period of fractured reform after 1994 and the thwarted plans for local government to become one of three autonomous spheres of government. Although regions continue to be shaped by local political histories and cultures, power has tended to be de-concentrated rather than devolved from the central government. The authors argue that decentralisation has been undermined by the ANC, which operates on the belief that development is nationally driven; federalism has been tainted by its associations with apartheid; and poor local capacity makes decentralisation unviable. Mogale and Picard agree that local government is indeed crippled by

poor human capital but that it is equally damaged by unfunded mandates. Their subsequent chapter explores government attempts at financial reform such as the Municipal Finance Management Act (2003). This chapter, whilst dealing with some of the thorniest political issues in South Africa, remains surprisingly apolitical in its analysis and lavish in its praise for consultants (p.189 and again on p.254).

Throughout these later chapters, the authors maintain their attention to urban-rural divergence. On the urban side, they chart many important developments, but again miss the opportunity to join the lively debates over policy development and the possibilities of a local developmental state (e.g. Parnell 2002; Nel and Binns 2003; Pieterse 2008 Freund 2010). They also lack the necessarily ethnographic detail to untangle local contestation in depth, as Hart does. Their chapters on rural local governance and traditional authorities would have benefitted from being merged: one explores Transitional Local Authorities, Regional Service Councils and District councils, but lacks a conclusion. The other tackles the continuing role of traditional authorities who were incorporated into rural local governance in 2010. The description of political divisions in different regions in this chapter is engaging. However, it would have been useful to hear more about the evolving political situation after 2010 and to see greater engagement with key scholars like Oomen (2005) or Beall Mkhize and Vwada (2004).

Picard and Mogale conclude that there is not yet a local political culture that 'supports democratic governance and tolerates differences' (246), nor is there a 'professionalised subnational public sector' (246). Later, they expand on the issues facing local governance highlighting the challenges posed by corruption and patronage, a lack of human capital, constrained finances, ideological schisms, a 'loss of values and ethics among the political class' (249) and the 'threat of violent demonstrations linked to the lack of service delivery' (249). They further note the ANC's continued resistance to local decentralisation, despite donor support for such processes, and the persistence of the prefectoral model of governance.

Their statement that there has been a wholesale 'loss of values and ethics' amongst an amorphous group labelled the 'political class' is indicative of the slippage that Picard and Mogale make towards over-generalised and under-supported statements throughout the book. Whilst academics must speak truth to power, these truths should be nuanced and honed; the powers towards which they are directed should to be carefully specified. In this context, Giorgio Blundo and JP Olivier de Sardan's (2001) work is helpful in equipping us to move beyond the idea that people *lack* morals and towards an understanding of the normative frameworks and demands at play that drive such perverse outcomes.

Generalising statements are most objectionable, however, when they focus on political marginalised groups. Tackling the issue of urban law and social order, for example, Picard and Mogale fundamentally misrepresent a heterogeneous, complex, hybridised issue by perpetuating the myth of 'African village life' that is timeless and regionally homogenous:

'Urban communities have an "adopted, urbanized, indigenous law". This system of justice is rooted in traditional Africa but has been adapted to the needs of urban life. Community-level procedures are similar to those in rural villages – straightforward and simple. They are based on indigenous values, an indigenous inquisitional process, and traditional institutions and processes. The South African black township is in many ways "an urban version of African village life"' (p.178).

Whether we look at elites or ordinary citizens, academics should be breaking down rather than reinforcing such generalised verdicts. This is precisely what Beresford does in his analysis of the ANC, NUMSA and NUM. Beresford does not shy away from their failures or those of their partners. Rather, he creates the analytical space to explore contestations within and between these organisations as well as their complex but meaningful relationship with black, working class South Africans.

Beresford's analysis comes in the wake of a 'NUMSA moment' – the point at which the union withdrew its support for the ANC and called on COSATU to break from the tripartite alliance. The immediate trigger for this split was the Marikana Massacre but Beresford explores the longer trajectory of struggles within the union movement and their significance. In doing so, he challenges the left wing scholars who have romanticised the social movement unionism in South Africa whilst still paying heed to significant role that unionism plays in the lives of ordinary South Africans today.

During this 'NUMSA movement' Beresford argues, we can see 'highly fluid and contested' divisions within the union movement (44). Heuristically, however, he argues that we can speak of an emerging ideological divide between a 'change faction' and a 'continuity faction' (27). The former was symbolically led by COSATU President S'dumo Dlamini and National Union of Mineworkers in support of Zuma and the ANC. The latter had been critical towards Zuma's government since 2010 and sought a more radical break from the status quo of tripartite government. Both factions reacted in divergent ways to key developments in the last five years such as the ANC's National Development Plan, the growing waves of strikes on the platinum belt, and the Marikana Massacre.

There is great uncertainty about how the NUMSA moment will be resolved within South Africa but Beresford argues that one resolution we cannot expect is a clean political break from the past. Many of the grievances at play have long historical roots and the 'interpenetration of union and ANC political struggles' (49) – particularly at the upper echelons of these movements – will fundamentally shape the politics of the possible. Beresford's mapping of this interpenetration and his exploration of corruption scandals, which have used to push factional purges, are both highly readable and astute.

To better understand the realities and possibilities of working class mobilisation, Beresford ethnographically exploring NUM's presence in Eskom power stations. He argues that what workers characterise as generational cleavages are actually

class cleavages forged through the relative mobility of different workers: with the demise of racial labour restrictions came opportunities for those who could leverage sufficient human and social capital. Those who could not progress, however, remain in jobs that appear increasingly precarious with the spread of outsourcing. Whilst young people have benefitted in this new work environment Beresford reminds us that many have also been left behind. The reverse is true for older workers (81). Generational cleavages can, therefore, only take us so far in understanding working class dynamics.

The divisions in labour explored above are reflected in and compounded by cleavages within the unions between the upper echelons of union leadership and their broader membership base. Leaders have been keen to capitalise upon opportunities for personal enrichment and connection. They also have an interest in maintaining union investment funds, which depend upon the stability of the very market that should be challenging. Altogether, Beresford argues, these divisions have reduced the internal democracy, inclusivity and effectiveness of organised labour. However, far from being unambiguously resentful of their rising counterparts, many less mobile workers valued seeing 'their own' in positions of relative power (88).

Moving beyond these internal union dynamics, Beresford explores the relationship between these working class individuals and the ANC. Like Hart, he argues that the politics of post-liberation nationalism is a sticky one: the ANC's tendency to label opponents as counter-revolutionaries is not just a reflection of a tired or 'exhausted' nationalism but a debate over who can speak for workers, and why, which holds great currency in today's political landscape (19). Rather than dismiss such exchanges, Beresford argues that we need to understand their contours and contestations. He also emphasises that class politics in this debate do not map neatly onto nationalism, nor completely capture it. The working class do not simply value the ANC's nationalist visions for economic reasons - they also look to the government for symbolic and ideological reinforcement as well as ethical leadership (119). Similarly, whilst race still plays an important role in political allegiance, there are broader and deeper 'enduring bonds of sociality' (Buhlungu and Psoulis 1999:268) that remain as important. Factors such as gender also play an important role in shaping these connections (122). Finally, whilst younger and upwardly mobile workers have taken more individualistic and less militant stances, we cannot herald the emergence of an apolitical generation in any simple sense.

In other words, the hegemony of the ANC remains contested but important. Of course, we need to keep in mind the sub-group of which Beresford speaks. Many of 'movements beyond movements' that Hart analyses are not workers. In this vein, Beresford notes that political allegiance is not impervious to change: The ANC must continue to offer the promise of improvement if it is to maintain the loyalty of these working class cadres (125). As I am writing this review, the demotion of South Africa's credit rating makes this seem all the less certain. Nonetheless, Beresford notes that the ANC's focus on a 'social democratic agenda' mean that workers remain 'ambivalent' but not 'uniformly disillusioned and in search of a new politics' (23). By probing the continued appeal of the ANC,

Beresford brings us full circle back to the realisation that 'neoliberalism' does not do justice to the 'multifaceted relationship' that organised workers have with the government (23).

Beresford's book is a lucid and perceptive analysis, which will be incredibly valuable for students of labour politics and movements in South Africa, and beyond. I would have welcomed more on the ways in which gender diversification in the workplace, informal workers, migrant workers, and processes of deindustrialisation have challenged unionisation and entered into recent conflicts, although Beresford touches on all of these issues (see, for example, 35, 67-70, 79). With changes moving on apace in union politics – particularly with the replacement of NUM leader Baleni and the definitive ousting of NUMSA from COSATU – this book provides a useful foundation from which to consider the possible reforms and likely limitations ahead.

Placed together, these books have provided us with multiple, valuable vantage points from which we can view the emergent contours of the South African political landscape and probe the shifting strata that lie beneath. Equally important, they have pushed us to ask whose voices we value in the midst of this mapping process. Whilst writers like Gramsci or Kant have proven to be useful interlocutors along the way, our primary guides must be those whose footprints have marked the terrain that we seek to interpret.

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